

JORDANI WEEK

Government dispenses 'bitter medicine'

The government has finally put an end to a spate of rumors when it announced last Sunday its decision to increase the prices of first grade (super) gasoline, diesel oil and fuel oil for industry. In an emotional announcement "a responsible source" said the new measures come in fulfillment of the 18-month long economic adjustment program. The source said these increases conclude the government's economic and fiscal measures for this year, meaning that the citizens should not expect any more increases for the rest of 1992.

The decisions were announced on the eve of yet another snow blizzard which hit the country on Monday. Many Jordanians believed the announcement was ill-timed. A government source said the decision was postponed for at least two months because of bad weather, but IMF pressures and with only a few weeks for Ramadan, it was decided to announce the increases now.

While the majority of Jordanians were happy that the price of regular gasoline did not change, many were shocked at the 40 per cent increase in the price of heating oil. The "responsible source" said only 10 per cent of fuel oil (solar) goes for heating Jordanian homes and that the rest is used by trucks for overland freight. The government sought to cushion the rise in heating oil by paying a compensation of no more than JD 100 during this year to those whose income does not exceed JD 300 monthly. But

the source did not explain how those eligible can claim their compensation. The government will also compensate bakeries to sustain the price of bread. Farmers who use fuel oil-powered pumps will also be compensated. According to the same source, the latest measures will help Jordan reschedule most of its debts for 1992 and the first half of 1993, while increasing the kingdom's foreign currency reserves and maintaining the stability of the Jordanian dinar.

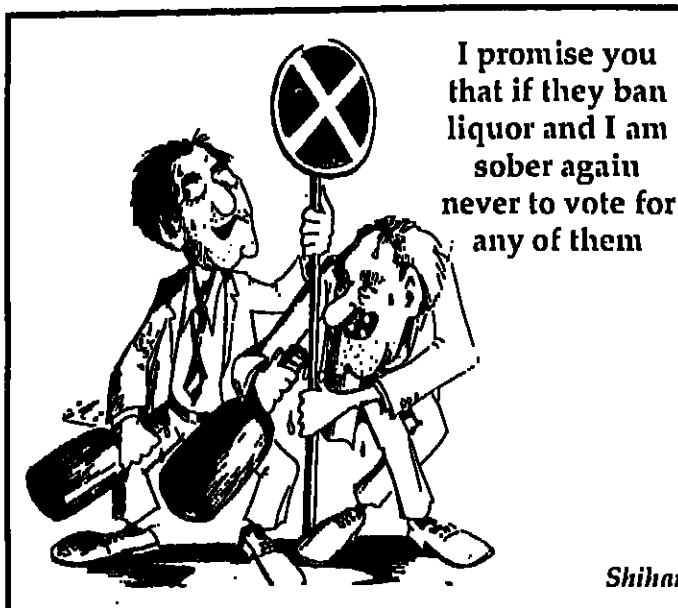
A Ministry of Supply order was issued the same day adjusting the prices of first grade gasoline, heating oil and fuel oil as follows:

First grade gasoline 300 fils/liter.
Heating oil (solar) 105 fils/liter.

Fuel oil JD 65/ton, except for the electric sector which will continue to purchase its oil at JD 41,400/ton.

While most Jordanians have been preparing themselves for Sunday's news, most are now worried about the ripple effects of the latest measures especially on the cost of living in general, prices of commodities and certain services and people's purchasing power.

The government tried to recruit the support of deputies to its latest decision, but only few deputies came out publicly in favor. The Lower House was expected to debate the measures Wednesday. Some deputies accused the government of breaking its past promise of prior consultation with the House before adopting austerity measures. By mid-week and as a fresh snow storm hit the



Shihani

country, it was clear that the government's move was becoming deeply unpopular.

Prohibition stirs controversy

A witty Lower House deputy dubbed it "The Black Label" session, referring to last Wednesday's vote by the House endorsing a Legal Committee recommendation to ban liquor and calling on the government to prepare a draft law to that effect.

The motion was adopted by 34 votes in favor and 20 against. Only 54 of the 80 deputies attended the session. A number of those who attended withdrew before the voting took place. They included Christian and secular deputies. Their withdrawal gave the Islamist deputies total control of the heated debates that took place. Only two deputies who are also Legal Committee members, Muhammad Faris Al Tarawneh and Faris Al Nabulsi, put up a strong fight against the proposal calling it unconstitutional.

Deputy Sheikh Abdel Baqi Jammo defended the proposal and said that even if the liquor

industry supports the budget and creates jobs, other avenues should be tried to battle unemployment.

The proposal calls on the government to prepare a draft law banning the consumption, manufacturing and trading of liquor in Jordan. The government should now by law prepare such a draft, but this could take months, if not years of legal haggling. Even if the draft law is sent to parliament, it would need a two-thirds majority to pass by both the Lower and Upper houses.

Observers say last week's motion and the ensuing controversy should not reflect negatively on Jordan's democratic process. "The Islamists pushed for the debate to satisfy their electorate. It's a stunt, that's all," said one political analyst. "It is now up to the government and to the 38 million liquor industry to fight back and they have many strong arguments on their side."

A government official said that that world should not see this event as a tilt towards extremism by Jordan. "Such a move (by the Islamists) was expected," he said. "We could not object to it at this stage because we (the

government) are not involved at this stage. But we will be from now on."

The popular Arabic weekly, *Shihani*, published a number of cartoons on the liquor debate, one of which criticized deputies for wasting their time on the prohibition law, while ignoring important ones like the parties and publications laws.

Foreign debts reduced

Central Bank of Jordan (CB) Governor Dr Mohammad Saeed Nabulsi has said that Jordan's foreign debts have fallen to about \$7 billion from \$8.3 billion two years ago. He estimated CB's foreign currency reserves at \$750 million in addition to another \$1 billion held by commercial banks. Dr Nabulsi expected foreign aid to Jordan during this year to amount to \$400 million. Meanwhile, talks were due to begin this Friday between Jordanian officials and the Paris Club of creditors in the French capital regarding the re-scheduling of \$5 billion Jordan owes to countries in the club. Dr Nabulsi was reported to have asked to be relieved of his duties on health reasons. No candidates have been named yet, but one source told The Star that Dr Nabulsi's resignation may lead to a wide-scale re-shuffle of posts in the Central Bank.

ArabSat III takes over

Minister of Communications Mr Jamal Al Sarireh flew to France last week to attend the launching of the third satellite for Arab telecommunications, ArabSat III, which was launched from French Guyana on 26 February. ArabSat III will take over from ArabSat I, which was launched in orbit seven years ago. ArabSat II was launched by US shuttle Discovery in June 1985, but has never been operational. The one-ton ArabSat III will be capable of managing 8000 telephone calls and seven television transmissions simultaneously.

Expats miss deadline

More than 6100 Kuwaiti-licensed cars have been repatriated by the Amman Customs Dept. until last week, it was reported. The deadline for the final repatriation of about 16,500 cars expired at the end of February but the government is considering an extension because of the snow storm which hit the kingdom last week. But Customs Dept. sources expected more than 4000 Kuwaiti-licensed cars to be re-exported because their owners could not pay customs duty. Most of the new models will be shipped to UAE buyers who then resell the cars to Iraq and Kuwait.

Thieves break into cars

The snow storm brought in Jordan to a halt, except for a few thieves who seized the opportunity and burglarized more than ten cars that were abandoned by their owners on the Queen Alia International Airport highway. The thieves broke into the cars, which included vehicles belonging to foreign embassies, a government minister and a senator, and stole radio-cassettes, lighters, attaché cases, cushions and personal documents. Police are investigating the matter.

Storm of the century paralyzes region

dan, Lebanon, northern Iraq and north west Iran under a thick blanket of snow and ice.

After three days of heavy snow fall, Jordanians began coming out of their besieged homes to an eerie moonscape. Snow was over half a meter deep in most of the hilly and mountainous areas. In some parts of Amman, Irbid and Tafleeh it reached 1.5 meters. And unlike the last four blizzards, this one defeated all efforts to keep the main roads and arteries of the kingdom open. Jordan was under the paralyzing spell of this storm for three days. Its hypnotic effect

stretched from the isolated north to the cut-off south. Even the lower parts of Amman failed to shed off the 35 centimeter thick skin and its bewildered inhabitants were snowed in for another day after the blizzard's departure.

Then the bulldozers arrived, slicing their way into the fluffy white matter all over the kingdom to open roads and revive the country's arteries, and in doing so they created an almost surrealistic terrain with icy boulders and frozen shapes scattered along the newly-opened roads. It looked like a war zone with craters, trenches and barricades all made of snow that stood defiant-

Continued on page 5

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ONE STOP SHOP AT
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INTERNATIONAL

By Mary Denis
Special to The Star

The unbeatable sound of the Japanese drums ensemble

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Entitled "Japanese Sounds, Vital Pulsations", it was a magnificent display of traditional types of drums, a flute, and a three-stringed lute set against a neat, decorated stage. Japanese motifs, colorful outfits, shining muscles, vibrant body movements, complimentary lighting — all these made it a truly unique experience.

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tics of Japanese traditional music and he integrates it expertly with all the visual effects.

For Renzan, his performances are not just a display of his virtuosity, his main objective is to involve the audience in the spectacle. But how did he achieve this goal in front of a foreign audience? How did he overcome the language barrier, and the lack of "feel" for Japanese music on the part of his audience?

A suitable solution was found in Nabil Sawalha, a well-known theater and TV personality who was asked to present the show. He became a link, a medium

through whom the artists could relate to the audience, while at the same time proving to be a gifted master of ceremonies.

Living proof of the audience's involvement in the show was their participation in the finale, 'Sabane-yagi-bushi', a lively arrangement of a traditional Japanese folk song by Renzan for flute (*shamisen*) and drums. Interestingly enough, the rhythm of the piece somehow resembled an Arabic beat, to which the audience spontaneously reacted by joining in with the musicians.

An enigmatic piece entitled 'Sounds of Ancient Yamato' depicted the 'pulsation' of the 4th century, Japan's most blossoming cultural period, and was also well received.

Wadaiko drums have more than a musical meaning to Renzan, they bind his family together. His wife, Takashi Tamamura, also plays in the Ensemble. Renzan's two sons, accomplished drummers in their own right, are also a part of the Ryu group.

Renzan's Ryu Ensemble feels strongly about popularizing Japanese drumming in both Japan and throughout the world. They travel extensively to promote the culture of drums, while their masterly performances find a broad response and appreciation everywhere.

The proverbial Japanese meticulousness and team spirit, caught up with all the parties involved produced a truly unique event for the Amman cultural scene. It looks like it may mark the beginning of more serious cultural cooperation between the two countries. ■

Sitting on top of the Early Bronze wall, and immediately next to the Middle Bronze construction is a Roman/Byzantine wall which seems to have a gate leading to a road giving access to the Pella spring at the base of the tell.

After 14 seasons of excavation, Pella is a site that has captured the hearts of the Australian archaeologists. Stephen Bourke has been there for 10 of the 14 seasons but is just one of many archaeologists who have turned year after year. Dr Pamela Watson is now back to work on Tell Husein which faces Pella and shares its history. In previous seasons she has found splendid remains of the Byzantine use of the tell which has a commanding view of the Jordan Valley and of the trade routes through the Esdralon valley to the Mediterranean.

Their work at Pella has also been important in making the Australian public aware of Jordanian archaeology through publications, lectures and, in 1990, a major exhibition at the National Gallery in Canberra. Under the title 'Digging in Time' the exhibition introduced the public to the history and archaeology of Pella over 12,000 years.

These range from a mortar and pestle dating back to the Neolithic period of 10,000 BC to lamps and coins of the Islamic era. In between come Bronze Age sculpture, Early and Middle Bronze pottery, Iron Age ceramic lamps, Roman glass and ceramic vessels, bracelets and gold earrings from the Byzantine era. Each season brings new finds and more details for the history of Pella which, says Stephen Bourke, will easily keep the Australians busy for another 14 seasons. ■



Pella finds on exhibit

unearthed the remains of an extensive Middle Bronze (1000 BC) wall, one of the earliest such walls ever found in the Jordan Valley, and 25 meters of an Early Bronze (2700 BC) wall very close by, which suggests that the physical shape of the settlement on the main tell at Pella changed little in over a thousand years.

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Pella casts its spell once more

By Pam Dougherty
Special to The Star

"IF IT'S February, it must be Pella" has long been a rallying cry for the Friends of Archaeology. Since 1979, when archaeological teams from the Department of Archaeology at Sydney University and the College of Wooster, University of Ohio came together as the Sydney-Wooster Joint Expedition to excavate at Pella in the Jordan Valley, an early spring trip to the site has been an essential part of the FOA program.

And so it was that on 14 February, Stephen Bourke of the University of Sydney, who is leading this year's team, found himself taking 30 keen Friends around the lush green site.

Pella, Tabaqat Fahl to its modern village residents, is a dream site. Located on a strategic crossroads that links the northern and southern Jordan Valley and the trade routes of China, India and

Arabia with the coastal towns of Palestine, and blessed with a perennial spring and mild climate, it shows evidence of human activity going back to a million years and of continuous habitation for six thousand years.

With such riches to pursue, each year's excavation must concentrate on one or two specific goals. This year, says Stephen, their major concentration is on expanding their knowledge of the Bronze and Iron Age (3000-500 BC) occupations at Pella.

He says they are intrigued by the remains of a large late Bronze Age (1450 BC) administrative complex/palace now under excavation, and dig house debate on just what is and what purpose it served is ferocious and far from settled. What is known so far is that it was a 20 by 15 meter complex with an open central courtyard, a number of side rooms and a large garden wall. The Pella team are hoping that by the end of this season

they will have the first complete plan of such a building in Jordan. The complex appears to have been in use for 100-150 years and they would like to be able to work out if there was a change in its use over that time or in the nature of the administration for which it was built.

At some time during its history, past holes were dug on the site and Stephen Bourke believes this could have been around 1300-1400 BC, at the time when the Pharaohs were complaining about Mubab of Pella and his father Labiya who were challenging Egypt's control of their administrative areas in Palestine. He believes they could have been nomads who were in transient occupation of the administrative building and had set up camp there. He admits, in good humor, that not everyone on the Pella team agrees with his interpretation of events, hence the active dig house debate.

The current season has also

Focus on Jordanian literature (5)

Elias Farkouh: A study in human suffering



Elias Farkouh

vent stories, and reveal their secrets. Thus tales are born and faces appear, and with the accumulation of fine sand, features are added and details are depicted. Events are structured within imperious worlds, set through the translucent domes, he sees them. These two crystal domes, one spalls out the details, and the other gathers them to form a tale with characters, features, action and mystery. Mysteries? Yes, and why not? On his forehead, an expression of profound thought was depicted, and on his face flowed a serene smile. Upside down, he turned the sandglass again, and began to observe how tales form inside crystal chambers — words, inside domes full of sand.

Like the narrator of the *Mysteries of the Sandglass*, Farkouh works out his tales, but instead of the crystal domes and the fine sand, he forms a literary work from experiences such as human pain, sorrow, bitterness, and the unexplained. Even in the most appointed experiences, bitterness and pain remain essential ingredients. For example, in the first part of the collection, which consists of five stories, the quest of the individual for independence, fulfillment, freedom, and privacy is the common theme, despite differences in the nature of characters and in events and places. This quest is perpetually frustrated through the intervention of society, its conventions, and politicized social institutions.

The ruthless humiliation of the writer in the first story, which he suffers at the hands of "the night visitors" is the punitive response to his violation of social taboos. Through writing a story, he uncovers three significant mysteries: The erotic scene between the girl and her lover which ends with the murder of the lover in the basement; the scene between the two ladies in the closed chamber and the uncovering of a secret agent who has infiltrated a party meeting. Thus individual freedom is restricted within a set of taboos that cover almost every aspect of his daily life, and even his conscious and unconscious practices.

The following is a story from the first part, entitled *A Violation*, where we find the most private individual freedom appropriated, regardless of the psychological impact that such

an act could have:

As she left the post office, she faltered in her perplexity and disappointment which showed not through the large, brown empty envelope but from a short letter and one, single book. She uttered no words, not even the abstract, unpremeditated, routine "thanks" which holds incongruous, contrasting emotions. Have you ever realized that "thanks" sometimes means "damn", while simultaneously bearing the character of gratitude? Yes, she did not utter even the word "thanks", but left the post office building, wrapped in her bewilderment and perplexity which struck her dumb, or, perhaps, robbed her of the desire to speak. So she covering left, fixing her eyes on nothing.

Apart from dozens of pedestrians and a countless number of cars, the street was empty. On the two thoroughly cleaned pavements, rows of flourishing trees stretched endlessly, colorful signs of stores that sell everything, and a birdless sky that found its comfort in its bareness; a cloudless, clear sky.

She looked back towards the container, its orange color faded. While tears rolled down her cheeks, she inaudibly and dejectedly cried: "What's above you, oh blue as diluted paint? How do you view such a loss? Who stole the books and disrupted connection and communication?"

When she first received the envelope from the official, she asked in amazement: "Who opened it?" He silently shrugged; and when she read the letter, she again inquired in surprise: "Who took the books?" He did not answer, but he did scratch his head, shrugged, scratched his head, and lit a new cigarette. Full of disappointment, defeat, and bewilderment, she asked: "Who should I complain to?" But the official had turned away in a corner, licking the stamps and sticking them on large, brown envelope that gained the elegance of travel and airmail. The girl looked at the elegant pile, then at her wrinkled, weary, violet one, then again at those decorated with the new, colorful stamps, and as usual, inaudibly asked, "Will they arrive with their contents?"

Wrapped up in her bewilderment and disappointment, she faltered as she left the post office with her large, brown empty envelope.

She fixed her eyes on nothing, despite the pedestrians, the cars, the two pavements, the stores, and the sky — yes, the sky that we all know, and which I now qualify as a scandalous, disparaging ceiling.

She raised her head, and there was the sky. She raised her head towards the clear, clean ceiling, and inaudibly asked, "What's above you, oh blue as diluted paint?"

Her tears overpowered her, and she pressed the large, brown envelope pouring her bitter, childish anger into it, and left it there — inside the orange-colored container which hung on a good citizen who cares to keep her city clean. She was not her city clean. She was not awarded a prize for her conduct; however, nobody saw people perform her duty towards her city; certainly, none. She is her city; certainly, none. She is as though in a dream, in a dirge, over snowflake-like swells of the pavement, her short, black hair, her rosy, transparent nest, and her rosy, transparent dress fluttering like angelic wings, although she wore milk-white trousers. She saw herself doing so, but nobody else saw

her. She sensed something wanting; something inexplicable, besides that which had left a great space for air inside the large, brown envelope, now shrivelled in the garbage; an ambiguous deficiency, tortuous to the soul. She pulled out the short letter from the single book which was in French, and reread the message:

"My dear, all my love; all my longing to my beloved. For your sake I work here in Morocco. The country itself is an attractive place, a warm bosom to receive you — to receive us — I know not how to write letters, particularly love letters. I love you. Enclosed are the four books you requested; as for the fifth, the Arabic translation is out of print, so I sent it in its original language as a souvenir. I perceive you do not know that language."

"Awaiting your reply, I hope you'll enjoy the books that are a means of connection and communication between us. I shall try to enjoy reading books as you do, and from this moment I'll start."

Your affectionate lover."

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velope emptied of four Arabic books which were to form continuous relations, communication, and enjoyment with her lover, but the four books were not there; are not there.

In this story, Farkouh picks out the most painful moment in an individual's lifetime, and attempts to reveal the inner suffering, not through delving into the innermost feelings and analyzing them, but through the accumulation of those details of the environment, social milieu and even natural phenomena that affect the character both physically and psychologically; an external-oriented technique aimed at inward revelation. The outcome of this technique is dramatically amazing; a true depiction of not only the external surroundings, but a real representation of the trauma suffered under such circumstantial pressures.

The same theme is present in the second, third, and fourth parts of the collection. In *Cities of Water*, and *Shoulders*, the individual's suffering under war conditions is exposed. In the third part, characters incessantly struggle against such impregnable powers as death and deprivation, attempting to resist them, but never to conquer or escape. Events are set in a gloomy atmosphere, paralleled with a vein of pain and despondency.

In the fourth part, which consists of two short stories, the emblem of suffering is taken one step further to authoritarian oppression, where individuals suffer from degradation and humiliation at the hands of unchallenged authorities. In this part, we notice that Farkouh attempts to present a reinterpretation of mythology and to elucidate a new dimension hitherto unfamiliar to the reader.

In *The First Blood*, the biblical story of Cain and Abel is seen in a new light. Cain's revolt is interpreted as a revolt against feudalism and aristocracy; the character of Adam represents the oppressive autocrat, while Cain symbolizes a revolt against such authoritarianism and dictatorship.

In his quest for the new, Farkouh employs mythology, religion, classical and modern Arabic literature as sources of inspiration. He captures the tension of human suffering when constructing his stories. The individual as an organism, a microcosm, presents through his desires, hopes, aspirations, love, inhibitions, despair, disappointment, and death a tragedy, a portrait of clashing opposing forces that constantly struggle to win, only to lose in an endless cycle of oppression, deprivation, and misery.

Fahd Al Salameh is a producer at Radio Jordan. He has an MA in English literature from the University of Jordan. ■

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By Mary Denis
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through whom the artists could relate to the audience, while at the same time proving to be a gifted master of ceremonies.

Living proof of the audience's involvement in the show was their participation in the finale, 'Sabane-yagi-bushi', a lively arrangement of a traditional Japanese folk song by Renzan for flute (*shamisen*) and drums. Interestingly enough, the rhythm of the piece somehow resembled an Arabic beat, to which the audience spontaneously reacted by joining in with the musicians.

An enigmatic piece entitled 'Sounds of Ancient Yamato' depicted the 'pulsation' of the 4th century, Japan's most blossoming cultural period, and was also well received.

Wadaiko drums have more than a musical meaning to Renzan, they bind his family together. His wife, Takeshi Tamamura, also plays in the Ensemble. Renzan's two sons, accomplished drummers in their own right, are also a part of the Ryu group.

Renzan's Ryu Ensemble feels strongly about popularizing Japanese drumming in both Japan and throughout the world. They travel extensively to promote the culture of drums, while their masterly performances find a broad response and appreciation everywhere.

The proverbial Japanese meticulousness and team spirit, caught up with all the parties involved produced a truly unique event for the Amman cultural scene. It looks like it may mark the beginning of more serious cultural cooperation between the two countries. ■

1 MARCH 1992

By Fahd A. Salameh

Writer Elias Farkouh's short story collection *Mysteries of the Sandglass* is one of the best of its kind in the Arabic literature series.

Born in Amman in 1948, Elias Farkouh received his education at the American and East Jerusalem schools. His literary talents showed in his secondary studies, and his literary work appeared in various magazines.

After gaining his General Secondary Education Certificate, he moved to London where he studied English language for one year, then he joined the Arab University of Beirut where he graduated in philosophy and psychology.

Returning home, he became a lecturer at Al-Akbar Literature Supplement and published his first story "Prometheus Under the Rain" in 1976. In 1981, he published his first short story collection, *The Slap*, in Amman. In 1981, he published a second collection *Low-lying Birds of Amman*.

In 1982, Farkouh also worked as a translator of the Jordanian newspaper *Al-Mahd* Quarterly. It closed due to financial problems.

Since 1985, Farkouh has been working as a publishing house, and has been translating English literary works into Arabic. He is a member of the Jordanian Writers Association and has published five short story collections. He wrote a novel in 1989 titled *Poam Heights*, which won the 1990 State Prize. He has also published three translated literary works, in addition to his contributions to literary magazines and journals.

Sitting on top of the Early Bronze wall, and immediately next to the Middle Bronze construction is a Roman/Byzantine wall which seems to have a gate leading to a road giving access to the Pella spring at the base of the tell.

After 14 seasons of excavation, Pella is a site that has captured the hearts of the Australian archaeologists. Stephen Bourke has been there for 10 of the 14 seasons but is just one of many archaeologists who have returned year after year.

Dr. Pamela Watson is now back to work on Tell Hush which faces Pella and shares its history. In previous seasons she has found splintered remains of the Byzantine use of the tell which has a commanding view of the Jordan Valley and of the trade routes through the Esdralon valley to the Mediterranean.

Their work at Pella has also been important in making the Australian public aware of Jordanian archaeology through publications, lectures and, in 1990, a major exhibition at the Australian National Gallery in Canberra. Under the title "Digging Time" the exhibition introduced the public to the history and archaeological facts of Pella over 12,000 years.

These range from a mortar and pestle dating back to the Neolithic period of 10,000 BC to lamps and coins of the Islamic era. Between come Bronze Age sculpture, Early and Middle Bronze pottery, Iron Age ceramic lamps, Roman glass and ceramic vessels, bracelets and gold earrings from the Byzantine era. Each season brings new finds and more details for the history of Pella which, says Stephen Bourke, will easily keep the Australians busy for another 14 seasons. ■



Pella finds on exhibit

unearthed the remains of an extensive Middle Bronze (1000 BC) wall, one of the earliest such walls ever found in the Jordan Valley, and 25 meters of an Early Bronze (2700 BC) wall very close by, which suggests that the physical shape of the settlement on the main tell at Pella changed little in over a thousand years.

The current season has also

Focus on Jordanian literature (5)

Elias Farkouh: A study in human suffering



Elias Farkouh

vent stories, and reveal their secrets. Thus tales are born and faces appear, and with the accumulation of fine sand, features are added and details are depicted.

Events are structured within imperious worlds; yet through the translucent domes, he sees them. Those two crystal domes; one spills out the details, and the other gathers them to form a tale with characters, features, action and mysteries. Mysteries! Yes, and why not? On his forehead, an expression of profound thought was depicted, and on his face flowed a sarcastic smile.

Upside down, he turned the sandglass again, and began to observe how tales form inside crystal chambers, worry, invade domes full of sand.

Like the narrator of *The Mysteries of the Sandglass*, Farkouh works out his tale, but instead of the crystal domes and the fine sand, he forms a literary work from experience, such as human pain, sorrow, bitterness, and disappointment. Even in the most animated experiences, bitterness and pain remain essential ingredients. For example, in the first part of the collection, which consists of five stories, the quest of the individual for independence, fulfillment, freedom, and privacy is the common theme, despite differences in the nature of characters and in events and places. This quest is perpetually frustrated through the intervention of society, its conventions, and politicized social institutions.

The ruthless humiliation of the writer in the first story, which he suffers at the hands of "the night visitors" is the punitive response to his violation of social taboos. Through writing a story, he uncovers three significant mysteries: The erotic scene between the girl and her lover which ends with the murder of the lover in the basement; the scene between the two ladies in the closed chamber and the uncovering of a secret agent who has infiltrated a party meeting. Thus individual freedom is restricted within a set of taboos that cover almost every aspect of his daily life, and even his conscious and unconscious practices.

The following is a story from the first part, entitled *A Violation*, where we find the most private individual freedom appropriated, regardless of the psychological impact that such

an act could have:

As she left the post office, she faltered in her perplexity and disappointment which showed not through the large, brown empty envelope but from a short letter and one, single book. She uttered no words, not even the abstract, impregnated, routine "thanks" which holds incongruous, contrasting emotions. Have you ever realized that "thanks" sometimes means "damn", while simultaneously bearing the character of gratitude? Yes, she did not utter even the word "thanks," but left the post office building, wrapped in her bewilderment and perplexity which struck her dumb, or, perhaps, robbed her of the desire to speak. So she cowering left, fixing her eyes on nothing.

Apart from dozens of pedestrians and a countless number of cars, the street was empty. On the two thoroughly cleaned pavements, rows of flourishing trees stretched endlessly, colorful signs of stores that sell everything, and a birdless sky that found its comfort in its bareness; a cloudless, clear sky.



She fixed her eyes on nothing, despite the pedestrians, the cars, the two pavements, the stores, and the sky — yes, the sky that we all know, and which I now qualify as a scandalous, disparaging ceiling.

She raised her head, and there was the sky. She raised her head towards the clear, clean ceiling, and inaudibly asked, "What's above you, oh blue as diluted paint?"

Her tears overpowered her, and she pressed the large, brown envelope, pouring her bitter, childish anger into it, and left it there — inside the orange-colored container which hung on the pylon, she left it. She is a good citizen who cares to keep her city clean. She was not awarded a prize for her conduct; can there be an award for such people? However, nobody saw her perform her duty towards the young lonely citizen walking over snowflake-like swells of the pavement, her short, black hair soaring high, despite its shortness, and her rosy, transparent dress fluttering like angelic wings, although she wore milk-white trousers. She saw herself doing so, but nobody else saw

her. She sensed something wanting; something inexplicable, besides that which had left a great space for air inside the large, brown envelope, now shrivelled in the garbage; an ambiguous deficiency, tortuous to the soul. She pulled out the short letter from the single book which was in French, and reread the message:

"My dear, all my love; all my longing to my beloved. For your sake I work here in Morocco. The country itself is an attractive place, a warm bosom to receive you — to receive us — I know not how to write letters, particularly love letters. I love you. Enclosed are the four books you requested; as for the fifth, the Arabic translation is out of print, so I sent it in its original language as a souvenir. I perceive you do not know that language."

"Awaiting your reply, I hope you'll enjoy the books that are a means of connection and communication between us. I shall try to enjoy reading books as you do, and from this moment I'll start."

Your affectionate lover."

She looked back towards the container, its orange color faded. While tears rolled down her cheeks, she inaudibly and despondently cried: "What's above you, oh blue as diluted paint? How do you view such a loss? Who stole the books and disrupted connection and communication?"

When she first received the envelope from the official, she asked in amazement: "Who opened it?" He silently shrugged; and when she read the letter, she again inquired in surprise: "Who took the books?" He did not answer, but shrugged, scratched his head, and lit a new cigarette. Full of disappointment, defeat, and bewilderment, she asked: "Who should I complain to?" But the official had turned away in a corner, licking the stamps and sticking them on large, brown envelope that gained the elegance of travel and air mail. The girl looked at the elegant pile, then at her wrinkled, weary, violated one, then again at those decorated with the new, colorful stamps, and as usual, inaudibly asked, "Will they arrive with their contents?"

Wrapped up in her bewilderment and disappointment, she faltered as she left the post office with her large, brown empty en-

velope emptied of four Arabic books which were to form continuous relations, communication, and enjoyment with her lover, but the four books were not there; are not there.

In this story, Farkouh picks out the most painful moment in an individual's lifetime, and attempts to reveal the inner suffering, not through delving into the innermost feelings and analyzing them, but through the accumulation of those details of the environment, social milieu and even natural phenomena that affect the character both physically and psychologically; an external-oriented technique aimed at inward revelation. The outcome of this technique is dramatically amazing; a true depiction of not only the external surroundings, but a real representation of the trauma suffered under such circumstantial pressures.

The same theme is present in the second, third, and fourth parts of the collection. In *Cities of Water*, and *Shoulders*, the individual's suffering under war conditions is exposed. In the third part, characters incessantly struggle against such impregnable powers as death and deprivation, attempting to resist them, but never to conquer or escape. Events are set in a gloomy atmosphere, paralleled with a vein of pain and despondency.

In the fourth part, which consists of two short stories, the emblem of suffering is taken one step further to authoritarian oppression, where individuals suffer from degradation and humiliation at the hands of unchallenged authorities. In this part, we notice that Farkouh attempts to present a reinterpretation of mythology and to elucidate a new dimension hitherto unfamiliar to the reader.

In *The First Blood*, the biblical story of Cain and Abel is seen in a new light. Cain's revolt is interpreted as a revolt against feudalism and aristocracy; the character of Adam represents the oppressive autocrat, while Cain symbolizes a revolt against such authoritarianism and dictatorship.

In his quest for the new, Farkouh employs mythology, religion, classical and modern Arabic literature as sources of inspiration. He captures the tension of human suffering when constructing his stories. The individual as an organism, a microcosm, presents through his desires, hopes, aspirations, love, inhibitions, despair, disappointment, and death a tragedy, a portrait of clashing opposing forces that constantly struggle to win, only to lose in an endless cycle of oppression, deprivation, and misery.

Fahd Al Salameh is a producer at Radio Jordan. He has an MA in English literature from the University of Jordan. ■

Pella casts its spell once more

By Pam Dougherty
Special to The Star

"IF IT'S February, it must be Pella" has long been a rallying cry for the Friends of Archaeology. Since 1979, when archaeological teams from the Department of Archaeology at Sydney University and the College of Wooster, University of Ohio came together as the Sydney-Wooster Joint Expedition to excavate at Pella in the Jordan Valley, an early spring trip to the site has been an essential part of the FOA program.

And so it was that on 14 February, Stephen Bourke of the University of Sydney, who is leading this year's team, found himself taking 30 keen Friends around the lush green site.

Pella, Tabagat Fahd to its modern village residents, is a dream site. Located on a strategic crossroads that links the northern and southern Jordan Valley and the trade routes of China, India and

Arabia with the coastal towns of Palestine, and blessed with a perennial spring and mild climate, it shows evidence of human activity going back to a million years and of continuous habitation for six thousand years.

With such riches to pursue, each year's excavation must concentrate on one or two specific goals. This year, says Stephen, their major concentration is on expanding their knowledge of the Bronze and Iron Age (3000-500 BC) occupations at Pella.

He says they are intrigued by the remains of a large late Bronze Age (1450 BC) administrative complex/palace now under excavation, and dig house debate on just what it was and what purpose it served is ferocious and far from settled. What is known so far is that it was a 20 by 15 meter complex with an open central courtyard, a number of side rooms and a large girdle wall. The Pella team are hoping that by the end of this season

they will have the first complete plan of such a building in Jordan. The complex appears to have been in use for 100-150 years and they would like to be able to work out if there was a change in its use over that time or in the nature of the administration for which it was built.

At some time during its history, past holes were dug on the site and Stephen Bourke believes this could have been around 1300-1400 BC, at the time when the Pharoahs were complaining about Mubabab of Pella and his father Labiya who were challenging Egypt's control of their administrative areas in Palestine. He believes they could have been nomads who were in transient occupation of the administrative building and had set up camp there. He admits, in good humor, that not everyone on the Pella team agrees with his interpretation of events; hence the active dig house debate.

The current season has also

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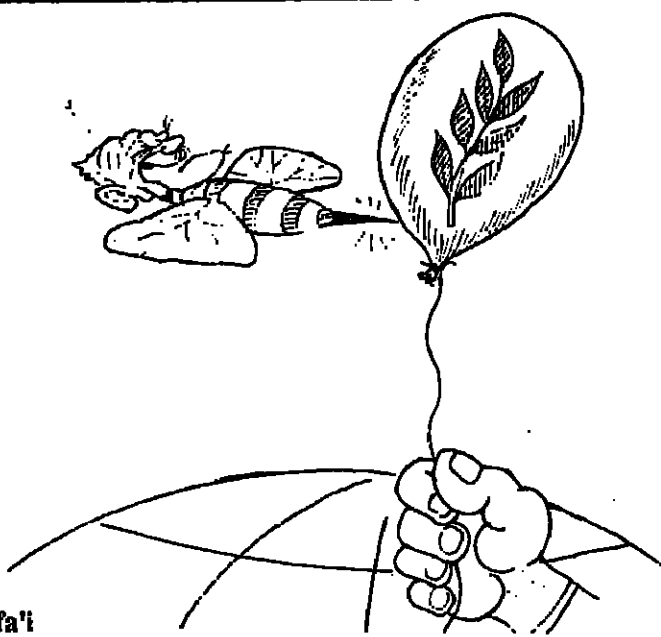
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Jalal Rifa'i

Our Say....

Stop punishing Jordan

THE JORDAN Shipping Association (JSA) has warned that Allied navies, particularly US ships, have intensified their operations in the Red Sea recently and prevented four commercial vessels heading to Aqaba from completing their journeys. The association said that the four ships were all carrying foodstuffs bound for Jordan and Iraq and had complied with all measures required by the Allied navy before sailing into the Tiran Straits. Still, these ships were randomly picked up by Allied captains, intercepted and returned without logical justification.

It is common knowledge by now that such acts hurt Jordan— itself a victim of the Gulf crisis— at a time when the country is struggling to stand on its own feet and battle against severe economic hardship. JSA's statement was actually a plea to world countries, the US and members of the UN Security Council in particular, to appreciate Jordan's unique position. Aqaba is Jordan's only gateway to the sea and the Allied navies' behavior only adds to the country's economic insecurity and hurts relations with its trading partners on personal and national levels.

Above all, these actions create a sense of outrage among Jordanians who will suffer from any unnecessary delay in food shipments.

Jordan has been honoring UN resolutions regarding Iraq from the very beginning. But Jordanians feel duty bound to extend humanitarian aid to their Iraqi brethren. Such aid includes sending food and medicine to help Iraqi children suffering from malnutrition as a result of the UN embargo. Jordanians cannot be made scapegoats because of their sympathy towards the Iraqi people who in the last two years have suffered from an economic embargo, war and political and economic unrest.

On the other hand, Jordan's strict adherence to the UN resolutions has been more than exemplary. Only the other day US Secretary of State James Baker assured a Congressional sub-committee that Jordan has not violated UN sanctions. Independent UN reports back his statement.

So why the heroics in the Red Sea? And why now? Jordanians have asked themselves these questions time and time again. Jordan is a sovereign country that has every right to question any attempt to discredit and hurt her. We are putting this question forward today.

Preventing food shipments from reaching Jordan contravenes the embargo mandate. Jordanians should not be made to suffer if the United States and her allies are trying to tighten their grip on the livelihood of the Iraqis. Both acts are immoral and inhumane in our view. Allied navies know for certain that no violations of the UN embargo have taken place by Jordanian shipping agents or importers.

We are calling on the UN Security Council to monitor the behavior of its navies in the Red Sea and to take into consideration Jordan's unique position. Aqaba, after all, is a Jordanian and not an Iraqi port. Jordan understands its responsibilities and has honored them from the outset. Acts of provocation in the high seas will only add to our indignation and frustration. Jordan should not be punished, but helped and assured. Allied actions in the Red Sea are not helping to restore our trust and confidence. Allied envoys have a responsibility here and they are requested to fulfil it.

You can't ignore the Palestinians!

By Daoud Kuttab

IF THE multilateral peace conference in Moscow showed anything, it was that you can't deal with the larger Arab-Israeli conflict without solving the main political problem in the area — primarily Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. Similarly, the Moscow conference showed that you can't deal with the Palestinian problem by ignoring two-thirds of the Palestinian people.

One of the main principles behind the idea of multilateral peace talks was to provide the long-term cement that would help keep any peace settlement worked out on the bilateral level from falling apart. While Israel came willing to talk to its immediate and not-so-immediate neighbors about long-term issues like the environment, sharing water resources and economic cooperation, it refused wholeheartedly to come to terms with the totality of the Palestinian problem.

Ever since its inception, the State of Israel has continuously tried to define the Palestinian problem as an issue of a minority population that has to have its civil rights assured, rather than as a people with national rights.

Even in recent months, Israel has acted on this policy. Israel is the only country in history to make the absurd request to tamper with the names of its enemy's delegation to peace talks.

In letters of assurances to the Palestinians and to Israel, the Americans made seemingly contradictory statements. They assured the Palestinians that no side has a right to veto the other side's delegation. But the US also assured the Israelis that

no one would be forced to speak to anyone they didn't want to.

When Palestinians in Madrid decided, for the sake of advancing peace, voluntarily to submit a list of Palestinians to which Israel couldn't say no, the Israelis took it as a permanent Palestinian concession regarding their representation. And in Moscow, Israel insisted that Palestinian representation be the same as in Madrid.

This kind of tampering with one's enemy's delegation to peace will not produce the type of long-term peace settlement that everyone is on record as being committed to. We must be able to overcome this issue, by facing reality and admitting what the conflict is all about.

The Israelis have yet to accept what the entire world has accepted for years: That for permanent peace to come to the Middle East, the totality of the Palestinian problem must be solved. This means recognizing that the conflict is a national conflict between two peoples who have different national aspirations.

Difficult issues like Jerusalem and the right of return must be dealt with. Denying them will not remove these problems or cause the other side to concede on them. Only by dealing with them head on in difficult and serious negotiations can a solution be found.

In fact, dealing with the totality of the Palestinian issue and with a genuine and representative Palestinian delegation should be Israel's request, if it is indeed searching for a lasting peace, because no settlement between Israel and the Palestinians will stick if it isn't conducted with a Palestinian delegation that can deliver what it signs.

Shamir must know that neither Dr Abdel Shafi or Faisal Hussein nor Hassan Ashrawi can deliver the Palestinian people. Only the PLO can do that. Abdel Shafi's legitimization is derived from the fact that the PLO in Tunis chose him and has directed his negotiating strategy since. If Israelis don't realize that, there is a major communication problem.

But if, for emotional and internal political reasons, Israelis are unable to deal directly with the PLO now, that can be swallowed; so long as it is recognized that sooner or later if they aspire to a steady and stable peace agreement, they need the signature of the Tunis PLO and not just the West Bank and Gaza PLO people.

Progress in the talks between Israel and the Palestinians also needs to be kept alive by a change in atmosphere in the occupied territories. How can there be peace without a cease-fire?

For Palestinians, a cease-fire will require that Israel first and foremost stop blasting the occupied territories. Bulldozers tearing up Palestinian land to make room for Jewish settlements is tantamount to constant and severe shelling. The policy of shooting at Palestinian protesters while political activity is illegal must also stop. In return, I believe Palestinians will undoubtedly stop most forms of violent protest, which are caused primarily by the Israeli oppressive measures.

Only when the parties to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are willing to recognize each other's national aspirations and their basic right to choose their own representation, followed by serious confidence-building measures on the ground, can progress in the peace talks be hoped for. Short of that, all the meetings, talks and negotiations will amount to nothing more than giving a dying cancer patient some pain killers.

The writer is a Palestinian journalist living in Jerusalem.

Playing by numbers in the Gulf

The stalemate in the Gulf has produced a plethora of statistics about the gains and losses of the adversaries in the war. The most confusing among these, and perhaps the most politically motivated, has been the fluctuating count of the Iraqi dead in the conflict.

By Sajid Rizvi
Academic File / London

LONDON — A few years ago I was escorted to the plush interior of a now deserted ministry building in Baghdad to interview a planning aide on the economic development of Iraq. The encounter had a suspicious beginning when the political interviewee told me, "You can ask me all the questions you want but don't expect any statistics."

Today, a year after war made all real or imagined economic figures insignificant, the Iraqi skies are thick with a crossfire of lies from the Iraqis themselves, from Arab neighbors, from the United Nations and from the United States. Most of the numbers relate to the war, and its colossal costs in human lives and injuries, material destruction and the all-embracing agony of missing or unknown. As the Iraqi festers, conflicting numbers seem to be determining the rules of the bitter political game being played out between Baghdad and Washington on the one hand and between Baghdad and the rest of the world on the other.

One of the disputed statistics is the number of the Iraqi dead. At the beginning of the war Allied accounts of the Iraqi military fatalities conveniently put the figure around 200,000 and then around 100,000. But later estimates spoke of only about 8,000 deaths — 1/25th of the original count. The revised Pentagon figures in early February further added to the confusion by almost conclusively arriving at an Iraqi dead figure of no more than 15,000.

The new information, Pentagon sources said, was based on evidence gathered inside Iraq — hospital reports, burial records and other information that, among other things, dealt the death from the desert. Western newspaper reports in the meantime radically revised downwards the figures of Iraqi troop deployment against the Allied ground forces, from an estimated half a million to no more than 200,000. The remainder, about 300,000,



are now believed to have deserted the Iraqi ranks under the allied onslaught.

But Dilip Hiro, author of the book *Desert Shield to Desert Storm: The Second Gulf War* (Paladin/Harper Collins), believes that there is more to the juggling of statistics, especially US estimates of the Iraqi war dead, than meets the eye. Much of the ongoing US effort to downgrade the Iraqi war casualties, he believes, has to do with the fact that the war remains very much on the American domestic political agenda. "Iraq, and Saddam Hussein particularly, is unfinished business and a potential embarrassment to (President George) Bush in his fight for re-election," he said in an interview. Hiro believes that the Bush administration may be preparing ground for a renewed assault on Iraq.

Other analysts do not dispute the political dimensions of the US numbers game but point out that the Pentagon fumbling with figures has to do perhaps as much with lack of experience of an incumbent administration. Don Kerr, defense analyst with the London consultancy Control Risk Group who was for a long time associated with the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), said he believed that Pentagon estimates stemmed from computer data processed within the parameters of rules established after World War II. "The United States has not really fought a war on the scale of the Gulf War since World War II," he said in an interview. "Korea and Vietnam were not at all like the Gulf war and the Pentagon has only just begun to face the statistical challenges posed by the conflict with Iraq."

Dilip Hiro believes that an institution that can bounce back and forth between estimates of 200,000 deaths to about 8,000 can hardly be considered reliable. He is convinced the first figures were as politically motivated as the current ones. In the early stage of the war, the United States obviously wanted to provoke the Iraqi people into action against Saddam Hussein. Today, he said, the United States' chief objectives seem to be to reassure the American electorate as well as the US allies in the Middle East that President Bush is on top of the Gulf situation and that upping Saddam Hussein remains high on his agenda.

The fluctuation in the Gulf War dead figures have been mind-boggling, leading to suspicion amongst analysts that they were but a mere cog in the allies' propaganda machine. At the outset, Hiro recalls, the Sunday Times quoted allied intelligence sources "speculating" in Washington that as many as 200,000 Iraqis may have died. A few weeks later General Norman Schwarzkopf, allied forces commander, offered an estimate of as many as 150,000. On 22 May 1991 the US Defense Intelligence Agency is-

sued its estimate of 100,000 with an "error factor" of 50 per cent, which meant that 50,000 to 150,000 Iraqis might have been killed.

The purpose of offering those high casualty figures, maintains Hiro in the book and again in the interview, "was to help create discontent against Saddam Hussein and his regime, and foment a popular uprising against them." In fact, he maintains, the real figure may be 82,500 — nearer a previous Pentagon estimate of 72,500 to 118,000 dead — made up of all the casualties in the bombing, ground fighting, attacks on retreating Iraqis and an estimated 8,000 Iraqi troops buried alive in their trenches by earthmovers and ploughs deployed in the ground assault by the US mechanized infantry division.

Whether the actual death toll ever becomes known or not, the United States still has to cope with the consequences of its half-measures for the Iraqis who survived the ordeal. Iraqis, never enamored of the United States because of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, are being fed by the Baghdad regime a daily diet of anti-Americanism reminiscent of the early days of the Iran hostage crisis.

Most analysts doubt that the US administration has ever seriously considered the option of eliminating Saddam Hussein because of fears the outcome will immensely strengthen Iran. Even if Saddam goes, there is no certainty that the Baath Party regime will disappear. On the whole, therefore, the chief objectives of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm remain out of reach.

As a recent IISS analysis of the conflict observed, the war changed little and "the Middle East remains fossilized in the old order, waiting for the political processes initiated by the Gulf crisis to be advanced and made clearer."

As things stand there is as much room for order as there is for disorder. Which prospect will become ascendant is dependent on three critical issues — the future status and role of Iraq, the response of the Arab regimes to their political and economic problems and the result of the Arab-Israeli process, according to the IISS study. As there has been little progress on the first two of these issues, said the study by Roland Dannreuther, hopes now rest on an Israeli-Palestinian settlement.

"The price of failure will be considerable," warns the IISS study. "It is sufficient just to contemplate that any future war in the Middle East will probably not be fought with conventional weapons alone."

A further imponderable on the complex landscape has been added by what one analyst sees as "descent of Central Asia into the Gulf." The rise of independent republics in Central Asia has propelled two major regional powers, Turkey and Iran, onto the central stage. While the former allies in the Gulf conflict have been content to let Turkey perform its usual role as the middleman, most Western powers are wary of Iran's intentions. Few amongst them, however, seem averse to an accommodation with Iran. As the future unfolds, Western powers may find they have to take the numbers game a few steps forward and rearrange their priorities with unforeseeable consequences all around.

Academic File.

Desert Shield to Desert Storm: The Second Gulf War. By Dilip Hiro. 591 pp. Paladin/Harper Collins.

The Gulf Conflict: A Political and Strategic Analysis. By Roland Dannreuther. Adelphi Paper No. 264. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

Sajid Rizvi is the managing editor of Academic File.

Middle East Underlined

It's Yitzhak vs. Yitzhak in Israel's June elections

AS THINGS now appear, it will be Yitzhak vs. Yitzhak — Shamir and Rabin — in the coming Israeli general election, as an yet untold tale match, with odds that are far from clear.

It's completely different from 1984 and 1988's familiar Shamir vs. Peres fights. Political analysts are quick to predict that with this year's contenders there is also a far greater chance for a friendly post-fight handshake, providing it ends not with an outright KO but a technical knockout for one of the Yitzhaks.

In that event, those two are much more likely to cooperate satisfactorily in a national unity government than did Shamir and Peres. While Peres strove relentlessly to undermine the last national unity government in which he served, Rabin and Shamir cooperated idyllically. They got along far better with each other than with their own party headlines.

In fact, Rabin opposed the Peres move which brought down the national unity coalition and labelled it "a sinking maneuver." Many in Labor agree that Peres has now finally paid for that failed maneuver in March 1990.

Though long-term prospects of getting along with Rabin appear better from the Likud's perspective, news of his victory was not greeted with glee in the Likud. The party's favorite adversary was Peres, whom it had gotten used to knocking zestfully. As long as Rabin opposed Peres, he was the Likud's darling Laborite, which helped make him popular with the general public. Now, the Likud will have to smash the new Labor leader it helped build up.

But if the Likud's reaction was equivocal, there was joy in the new left-wing bloc. The leftist strategists see the Rabin win as worth a few additional Knesset mandates for them.

The idea is that Rabin will frighten from Labor's corner diehard "peaceniks" who would have stayed with the Peres camp but to whom Rabin is anathema. These voters, the leftist reckoning is, would flee straight into the new list's open arms.

The trouble, left-wingers fear, lies in longer-term ramifications. Rabin could lose the left of his party, but might well fail to win the voters floating between the Likud and Labor.

There are not all that many floaters and, by election day, they will tend to head back to the Likud, it is argued. Hence, the left is far from sure that Rabin improves Labor's chances to form a government, though he is an asset for the left's electoral prospects.

In the internal Labor configuration, the outstanding fact is that Rabin had a hard time beating Peres even after Peres's four electoral defeats and other unsavory chapeau. Rabin managed to climb with the greatest difficulty over the 40 per cent hurdle in an unprecedented cliffhanger that lasted till the very last votes were in early yesterday morning. This happened despite the fact that Rabin was the odds-on favorite and that he was no longer an anti-establishment underdog.

In fact, the party establishment had hitched itself long ago to his bandwagon and had abandoned Peres. One need only glance at the long list of Knesset members who endorsed Rabin and at the negligible number who maintained loyalty to Peres. The party machine was not defeated this time: it merely changed sides.

Jerusalem Post

Le Jourdain

Section française du Star

L'orage du siècle

Trois jours de neige et de blizzard ont provoqué d'énormes dégâts en Jordanie et dans toute la région. Dans le seul royaume, 260 blessés... C'est le cinquième orage qui s'abat sur la Jordanie depuis le mois de janvier. De mémoire de Jordanien, l'hiver 1991-92 est le plus rude jamais connu.



Portefeuille

Hausse spectaculaire des carburants

Le prix du "super" à la pompe augmente de 11%

VOTRE PORTEFEUILLE en souffre déjà: la Jordanie a décidé dimanche dernier, une hausse du "super", du mazout et des combustibles en tout genre. Une telle mesure, entre dans le cadre du programme de redressement économique, mis au point par le gouvernement jordanien et le Fonds Monétaire International (FMI). Ce plan, fixé pour la période 1992-98 doit assurer, des sources de financement au pays. But de l'opération: renforcer la balance des paiements et reconstruire les réserves en devises du royaume.

Cette mesure doit renforcer le Trésor jordanien d'un montant d'environ 40 millions de dollars, au moment où le pays s'apprête à faire face au remboursement du service de sa dette extérieure, estimé à 1,5 milliards de dollars.

Le montant total de la dette jordanienne est de 7,2 milliards de dollars. Le Club de Paris devait se réunir vendredi 28 février, pour étudier son éventuel rééchelonnement.

Pour le Jordanien moyen, ces mesures ont des répercussions précises sur les différents prix de vente des carburants. Le litre de "super" coûte 300 fils, ce qui représente une hausse d'à peu près 11%. Le mazout passe à 105 fils le litre et augmente donc de 40%. Quant au fuel utilisé dans l'industrie, il s'achète 65 JD la tonne, soit une hausse de 35%.

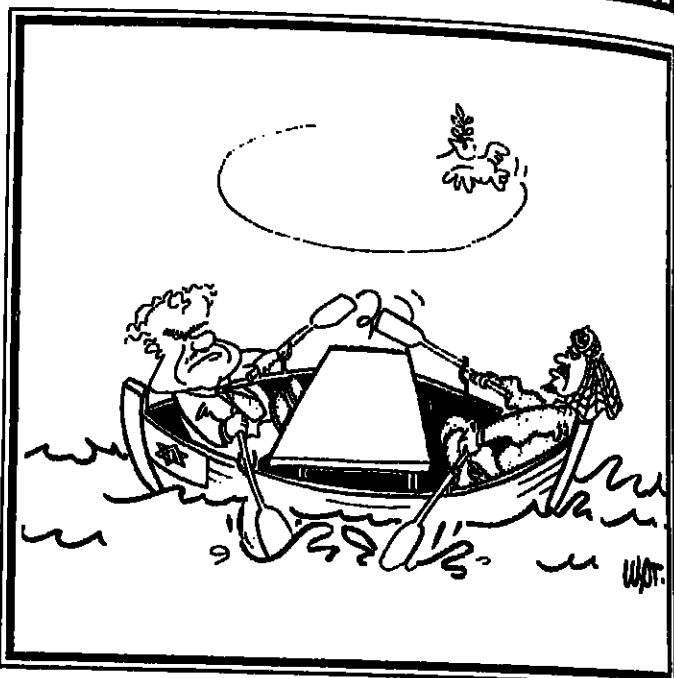
En revanche, le fuel qu'utilisent certaines entreprises pour s'alimenter en électricité ne bouge pas. Il reste à 41 dinars la tonne.

Cette décision, annoncée par le "Ministry of Supply" et prise en

accord avec le Conseil des ministres s'accompagne d'une mesure en faveur des familles des classes les moins favorisées. Les ménages, dont le revenu ne dépasse pas 300 JD par mois vont toucher 100 JD du gouvernement au cours de cette année. Une véritable prime de chauffage pour les plus défavorisés.

Le gouvernement s'est empressé d'expliquer les raisons d'une telle hausse. Le Premier ministre, Zeid ben Shaker a invité les jordanien à comprendre et à coopérer. De son côté, le Parlement a déjà prévu une session pour aborder le sujet. Précision rassurante: cette mesure devrait être la dernière pour l'année 92. C'est du moins la promesse des autorités jordanien.

(Avec AFP)



réflex. Orient

POLIO - 32 cas de polio recensés en Jordanie depuis décembre dernier. Deux enfants ont déjà trouvé la mort des suites de cette maladie. Pour faire face à ce fléau, le ministre jordanien de la Santé a lancé lundi dernier une campagne nationale pour la vaccination des enfants en bas-âge. Aref Al Bataineh a exhorté les hôpitaux jordanien, et de nombreuses organisations à participer à cette campagne. Malgré les intempéries, 300.000 enfants de moins de cinq ans ont déjà été vaccinés.

PAIX - Les pourparlers bilatéraux de Washington-quatrième round, semblaient hier, s'achever vers une impasse. Les Israéliens refusent toujours le principe d'un retrait des Territoires occupés depuis la guerre de 1967. Les Arabes maintiennent leur position et demandent l'application des résolutions 242 et 338 des Nations Unies. Côté américain, seul le chef du département d'Etat, James Baker, est monté au créneau devant un comité du Congrès américain, liant l'octroi de garanties de prêt à Israël à l'arrêt de la colonisation des Territoires occupés.

IRAK - Le conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies appelle l'Irak à entamer la destruction de ses missiles balistiques. Hier, l'Irak a demandé un sursis. L'ONU a rappelé sa mission d'inspection en Irak.

réflex. France

NICE - "Cette courte victoire servira de leçon à tout le monde" a affirmé la candidate UDF-droite libérale, Marie-Jeanne Murcia, qui a coiffé sur le poteau Jacques Peyrat (FN) au deuxième tour de la cantonale de Nice. Au premier tour, le représentant du Front National, parti d'extrême-droite avait largement distancé tous les autres candidats en recueillant 37,96% des voix.

SCHERER - L'ex-numéro deux de la diplomatie française, François Scherer, estime ne pas avoir "failli à sa tâche" dans l'affaire Habache, qui lui a coûté son poste. L'ancien secrétaire général du ministère des Affaires étrangères l'a fait savoir dans un télégramme d'adieu adressé à ses collègues de travail. Dans le "Journal du Dimanche", François Scherer précise qu'il ne critique personne dans ce message et en aucun cas le ministre Roland Dumas.

J.O. - Albertville, c'est fini! Le président du Comité international olympique (CIO), Juan Antonio Samaranch, a clôturé les Jeux Olympiques d'hiver. Il a transmis le drapeau au maire norvégien de Lillehammer, qui devra organiser les prochains Jeux, en 1994. Environ 33.000 personnes assistaient à cette cérémonie. Au palmarès des médailles, l'Allemagne arrive en tête, devant la Communauté des Etats indépendants (CEI) et la Norvège. La France se contente de la septième position.

A VOIR...

CINEMA - Cycle "visages, ambiance et nostalgie" au CCF. L'imposante présence de Raimu, le magnétisme de Louis Jouvet, l'irrésistible sourire de Gérard Philipe viennent hanter nos souvenirs. Mardi 3 mars, à 20h00, GRIBOUILLE (1937), de Marc Allégret, avec Raimu et Michèle Morgan. La trame: un brave homme prend en pitié une jeune femme accusée d'un crime. Il la fait acquitter.

EXPOSITION - Au CCF, du 4 au 14 mars, "Aquarelles de France Slovaque". Ce peintre Slovaque est un des grands et rares aquarellistes connus en Europe et surtout en France. Les grandes aquarelles qui seront exposées au CCF ont pour thème "les bouquets de la mer".

RECTIFICATIFS - Les concerts flûte et guitare, prévus le 24 février au Centre culturel royal et le 25 février à l'hôtel Holiday Inn d'Aqaba, sont reportés aux 2 et 3 mars. La conférence sur la "Nouvelle situation" aura lieu en avril. L'exposition Villégatures est annulée. L'expo Peintures d'enfants ne fermait ses portes que le 2 mars.

Parlement

L'alcool à l'ordre du jour

Deux semaines après le "vote des 34", le sujet hante toujours la coupole. Reportage

POURQUOI FAUT-IL que je me parle de ce sujet? Est-il si important pour que vous lui consacriez un article? Tel est le premier commentaire d'un des députés musulmans, Frères Musulmans, Khalil (Tafelch), à l'interdiction de l'alcool en Jordanie. Pour beaucoup, une question banale. Pourtant, dans les débats du Parlement, le sujet est plus que jamais à l'ordre du jour.

Chaque nouveau commentaire dans la presse jordanienne allume les conversations, émaille les débats partagés. "La Jordanie est un pays musulman; l'alcool est interdit par l'Islam. Nous devons par conséquent franchir ce pas", nous confie l'un des fonctionnaires du Parlement. "Cela ne se fera jamais. Nous ne voulons pas isoler la Jordanie du reste du monde et surtout de l'Occident", déclare son collègue.



Ahmad Al-Kafawein

Ce projet avait déjà été évoqué lors de la session parlementaire précédente. Récemment, il a été examiné par la Commission Juridique du Conseil des Députés, puis soumis à l'approbation de

cultés. Tous ceux qui respectent l'être humain devraient nous soutenir dans cet effort." Aref Al-Bitoush, député de Kérak appartenant au bloc parlementaire des Islamistes Indépendants et Ministre d'Etat chargé des Affaires Parlementaires, approuve également ce projet. "L'alcool est responsable de nombreux drames sociaux et de comportements irresponsables. Saviez-vous qu'en Jordanie, un crime commis sous l'effet de l'alcool permet à son auteur de bénéficier de circonstances atténuantes? Ce n'est plus acceptable!"

L'aspect économique? Ahmad Al-Kafawein reconnaît qu'il faudra y être particulièrement attentif. "Dans tout projet, il existe

des points positifs et des points négatifs. La solution réside sans aucun doute dans la reconversion des industries jordanien qui fabriquent actuellement de l'alcool; jus de fruits et produits laitiers par exemple peuvent remplacer les boissons alcoolisées et éviter ainsi la fermeture de ces industries et la suppression d'emplois."

"De toutes façons, la fabrication de l'alcool est une activité mineure dont la part dans l'économie jordanienne est plus que secondaire", déclare Aref Al-Bitoush.

Chacun s'accorde à dire que cette "affaire" ne devrait pas éfrayer les Chrétiens, qu'ils soient jordanien ou non. "De tout temps, les Chrétiens ont bénéficié d'un statut spécial, garanti par l'Islam. Ceux qui voudront consommer de l'alcool pourront le faire chez eux. Ce qui se passe à l'intérieur des maisons ne nous regarde pas."

Quant aux étrangers, désireux de se rendre en Jordanie, touristes ou hommes d'affaires, "certains apprécieront cette mesure, car elle est un gage de sécurité et de confiance. D'autres l'exagéreront et l'utiliseront contre l'intérêt de la Jordanie."

C'est maintenant au Gouvernement d'abandonner son jeu. Avant de renvoyer le dossier au Parlement. Le temps pour les plus anxieux, de boire un petit verre. Sera-t-il le dernier? ■

Michèle Rieux

L'alcool est une maladie dont il faut débarrasser la société jordanienne

l'interdiction de la fabrication et de la commercialisation de l'alcool est une affaire sérieuse et nous ne la considérons en aucun cas comme une simple mesure de police. Nous sommes par rapport aux nombreux défis intérieurs et extérieurs auxquels la Jordanie est confrontée, confie Fouad Khulief. Mais nous devons l'abandonner insiste-t-il.

l'ensemble du Conseil. Pour Ahmad Al-Kafawein, député Frère Musulman de la circonscription de Kérak, "l'alcool est une maladie dont il faut débarrasser la société jordanienne". "En Occident, ajoute-t-il, de nombreuses associations luttent contre l'alcoolisme, tel est également notre but. L'alcool, même en petite quantité, nuit à l'homme et à ses fa-

Secteur alcoolisé

La grogne des patrons

Dix usines jordaniennes productrices d'alcool se sentent menacées par la "proposition des 34". "ILS VEULENT faire de la région une loi, c'est incroyable, aujourd'hui, ils parlent de l'alcool, demain, ils vont nous parler de comment nous habiller, comment marcher, comment conduire" affirme le directeur financier d'une importante firme productrice d'alcool.

Son chiffre porte-malheur est le 34, 34 comme le nombre des députés qui ont récemment voté "Nous tremblons, nous avons peur pour la plupart de nos projets, nous hésitions à importer des machines et des produits de base".

Une "proposition" pour interdire la production, la vente et la distribution d'alcool en Jordanie. Au total, une dizaine de patrons d'usines de boissons alcoolisées se tiennent sur leurs gardes. "Ce n'est pas nouveau, confie l'un d'eux, l'idée a déjà été évoquée l'année dernière". Cette fois, elle a été approuvée par une majorité de parlementaires (34 sur 54).

La proposition de loi doit en-

core, telle une balle de ping-pong, rebondir favorablement dans le camp du Gouvernement, avant de revenir dans celui du Parlement. La procédure sera longue. Mais déjà, les patrons préparent leur défense, arguments économiques à l'appui.

Le secteur de la production des boissons alcoolisées, en Jordanie, c'est une dizaine de firmes, détenues par les chrétiens du royaume. Les musulmans se tiennent à l'écart de ce type d'activité. Loi jordanienne oblige. Les investissements dans ce domaine: environ 38 millions de dollars. 750 salariés travaillent dans le secteur. "Nous sommes sûrs que cette proposition va avoir des effets néfastes sur l'industrie jordanienne qui s'est développée ces dernières années" lance un patron. Un confère, sur la même longueur d'onde: "Cette année, nous espérons avoir 250 employés, nous voulons augmenter nos exportations (moins de deux millions de JD pour la précédente), nous ne pourrions pas progresser si nous rencontrons des problèmes". Il ajoute: "Nous tremblons, nous avons peur pour la plupart de nos projets, nous hésitions à importer des machines et des produits de base".

Une telle loi, si elle passait, pourrait ébranler plusieurs secteurs de l'économie jordanienne. "C'est une chaîne, la vie



750 employés travaillent dans ce secteur

de beaucoup de firmes dépend de nos compagnies productrices d'alcool. C'est valable pour les transports, l'emballage, les assurances..." Les patrons des dix usines ne comprennent pas, cette vague anti-alcool, à priori non justifiée.

La boisson est bien loin de représenter un fléau pour le royaume. La consommation annuelle du jordanien est d'un litre de bière, un sixième de litre d'Arak. Il suffit de multiplier par 100 pour obtenir le ratio européen: "La preuve que la politique de nos gouvernements en la matière a jusqu'à maintenant été couronnée de succès" affirme un patron de compagnie. Avant de porter le débat sur le terrain idéologique: "La Jordanie est présentée comme un merveilleux pays pour la libre entreprise, pour ses attractions touristiques, pour son attachement à la notion de liberté. Le vote d'une telle loi irait à l'encontre de la

démocratie". Les yeux sont maintenant rivés sur le gouvernement. Un cruel dilemme se profile à l'horizon politique de l'équipe Ben Shakar. Deux semaines après la présentation de son plan pour l'emploi, le Premier ministre trouve entre ses mains un dossier qui rime avec chômage. Sans compter les recettes que représentent pour le Trésor, les différentes taxes afférentes aux produits alcoolisés. Celles qui touchent la production locale sont de l'ordre de 14 millions de dollars par an. Les taxes sur l'importation d'alcool représentent 11 millions de dollars. Selon des sources officielles bien informées, l'adoption de la "proposition des 34" serait exclue, en raison des répercussions négatives qu'elle aurait sur l'économie du pays. De quoi rassurer, pour le moment, dix patrons d'usines de boissons alcoolisées. ■

Francis Mazoyer

L'EDITO

de Suleiman Sweiss

Prix et sacrifices

LA NOUVELLE augmentation des prix déferle sur la Jordanie. La première vague s'est produite la semaine dernière, jetant un froid sur le royaume. Félicitons-nous. Pour le moment, seuls les prix du "super", du mazout et du "fuel", nécessaires pour certaines industries, sont concernés. Mais quelles hausses! Elles s'évaluent de 11 à 40%.

Parallèlement, le gouvernement a décidé de soutenir les foyers plus ou moins défavorisés, pour leurs dépenses de chauffage. Cent J.D. seront accordés pour l'année 1992, à ceux qui gagnent moins de 300 dinars par mois.

Apparemment, le gouvernement ne pouvait pas attendre jusqu'à la fin du Ramadan. Il fallait coûte que coûte annoncer la décision avant les négociations du Club de Paris (28 février), qui devaient aboutir sur un rééchelonnement des dettes extérieures. Le mystère s'éclaircit. Un économiste a révélé le 15 février dernier que le gouvernement avait déjà pris des engagements devant le FMI en vue d'augmenter le prix des carburants.

Reconnaissons-le: à l'exception des articles subventionnés par l'Etat, l'année dernière, les prix ont augmenté à plusieurs reprises. Les citoyens ne consomment pas seulement du riz, du pain ou du sucre. Difficile de joindre les deux bouts pour bon nombre de familles.

Dans un pays comme la Jordanie, les prix ne dépendent pas seulement de l'offre et de la demande. Cette question touche aussi à la conjoncture politique.

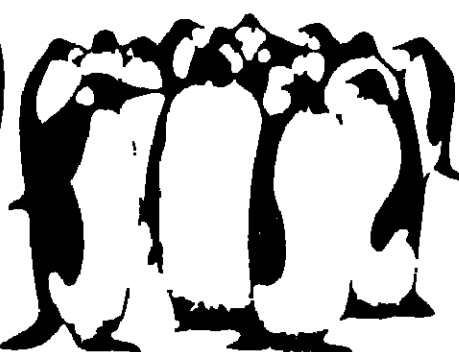
Notre pays traverse actuellement une période très difficile. Pressions politiques et économiques se conjuguent pour l'étouffer ou pour le forcer à changer d'orientations. Ces pressions proviennent des pays étrangers, comme des pays arabes, dis "frères". Nos principes doivent nous servir de rempart contre ces perpétuelles attaques.

Retour à la vie quotidienne. Le gouvernement peut encore jouer la carte de la redistribution et prendre des mesures en ce sens. Le fardeau doit être équitablement réparti sur les épaules de tous les citoyens.

Jusqu'à maintenant, les défavorisés sont les grands perdants de ce jeu économique. Ce sont eux qui consentent le plus grand nombre de sacrifices. Lorsque le vase déborde, les protestations populaires éclatent, comme en 1989.

Pourquoi répéter les mêmes erreurs? Plus que jamais, les gros salaires doivent faire des concessions. C'est cela le véritable "ajustement structurel" qui constitue le remède pour notre pays. ■

AROUND TOWN



Congratulations!!
Graduations, appointments, engagements, weddings, newborns, promotions, special awards, excellent achievements.....
Drop us a line and send a photo...we will run it free of charge in The Star's People and Events page.

Many Ammanites were thrilled to see His Majesty King Hussein personally supervising operations to open snow blocked streets on Wednesday. The King, driving his Mercedes four-wheel drive, was accompanied by TRH Princess Ali, Hamza and Princess Haya. The King was also joined by Prime Minister Sharif Zaid bin Shaker. King Hussein visited the Ministry of Public Works where he met with ministers Abdel Karim Kabariti (labor), Saad Hail Srour (public works), Jawdat Shouf (interior) and Mohammad Saqqaf (supply) who briefed His Majesty.

Her Majesty Queen Noor represented Jordan in a special UN meeting on the economic development of rural women, which was held in Geneva last week. Accompanying the Queen was Mrs Laila Sharaf. The meeting, which was attended by the representatives of 64 countries, was opened by UN Secretary-General Dr Butros Ghali.

Ideal Systems, agents for Apple Computer Inc., in cooperation with UKAZ (United Kingdom Alumni Club) held a quiz night at the Jordan InterContinental Hotel last Friday 21 February. The evening included dinner and was packed with participants. Questions covered a wide variety of topics and prizes were awarded to first, second and third place winners.

Dr Amin Nasser has been recently elected to the fellowship of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). The college council elects the fellows on merit. The Admission ceremony for the new fellows will be held at the College in London, on Friday 5 June 1992.



HRH Prince Faisal bin Al Hussein patronized a celebration held on the occasion of Arbor Day at the Bsharat Golf Club in cooperation with the InterContinental Hotel. The event was attended by HRH Princess Muna in addition to a number of high ranking officials, Arab and foreign diplomats and the members of the club. Staff members of the hotel participated in planting 1992 olive trees under the slogan "Towards a Greener Jordan."



Mrs Ingrid Phillips organized last Monday a charity bridge session at the Plaza Hotel. The proceeds of the event will go in aid of a mobile cancer clinic. This clinic is designed to locate and treat children suffering from leukemia. The Plaza Hotel offered the playing hall and refreshments completely free of charge so as to minimize expenses. Mrs Phillips is currently planning for a bigger charity bridge function when she returns from a short visit to Damascus.

Jordan takes part in Puppetry festival

By Hind-Lara Mango,
Special to The Star

ELEVEN COUNTRIES participated in the Eighth International Festival for Puppetry in Tunis in February. The six Arab countries taking part were: Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and for the first time Jordan. The six member team from Jordan was headed by Wafa Qusous from the Ministry of Culture.

Their puppet production "My Grandmother's Chest-tales," directed and written as part of Qusous' thesis for her masters degree, dealt with the themes of culture and heritage. In Tunis it was commended for its original subject which was particular to its country. "Most of the other Arab participants had adapted other stories of produced plays that had nothing to do with their countries," said Qusous upon her arrival.

Jordanians witnessed this show in 1990 as it toured differ-

ent areas of the country. Similarly, this show was presented in various parts of Tunis three times, to an audience of about 300 every time. Jordanian Ambassador to Tunis, Haydar Mahmoud and his wife attended the final show, as well as members of the Jordanian community there.

Qusous added that "we were asked to extend our stay and to perform more shows. Unfortunately, our schedule did not permit us to do so. But we had a memorable time in Tunis where everyone was extremely cooperative and appreciative of our production."

According to Qusous, this event was very exciting and useful in that it brought together people from all over the world. Consequently, the Jordanian team proposed the idea of establishing an Arab Union for Puppetry. There were suggestions that it include only African countries in which Jordan would

be excluded, but after lengthy talks it was decided that the Union would be a body representing Arab countries in general. A temporary preparatory committee has been set up with Salah Al-Sakrah, director of the Cairo theatre for puppetry, as its president.

It was agreed that the committee would meet twice this year with the first meeting in Jordan. It was also agreed that the Union's base would be in Tunis, since it was the only Arab country to hold festivals of this nature.

It is planned that by 1993 the Union will be officially inaugurated. The aims are of producing regular publications something similar to the Union International de la Marionnette (UNIMA) whereby yearly festivals would take place, and there would be a constant exchange of ideas. Hopes are high for introducing puppetry in education and utilizing it as a means of therapy.

Workshop on environment seeks national awareness

By Lina Arafat
Special to The Star

IT IS only within the last generation that the world community has begun to realize the sheer magnitude of threats to the global environment, and how the destruction of forests and the burning of coal and oil affect both the climate and human welfare worldwide.

This was one of the comments that were made during a one-week workshop entitled "Action Groups in Environment Protection", which was held recently by the Jordanian Society for the Control of Environmental Pollution in cooperation with the Friedrich Nauman Foundation (FNF) of Germany. The workshop was held within the framework of the National Environmental Information and Education Programme (NEIEP).

Twenty participants represented various public and private institutions in Jordan and acted as liaison officers, gathering information and promoting awareness on environmental protection in their areas.

Society Chairman, Mr Ahmad Obaidat, addressed the opening session, underlining the importance of urgent action. "Several adverse social and economic practices are causing severe damages to the environment in Jordan, and the time has come to define those responsible for this situation in a bid to prevent further deterioration," he said.

FNF has been active in Jordan for ten years now. Mr Walter

Rudel of the FNF said, "since environmental problems are being felt in many developing countries, we thought it would be a good idea to foster and stimulate the environmental movement in Jordan, providing up-to-date information on global and national issues, discussing the problems with a concerned audience and raising and stimulating environmental awareness and action."

Director of the NEIEP program, Mr Munir Adham said, "We are teaching those involved with the program to act as pressure groups to foster environmental activities and to learn how to develop without harming the environment."

Though international and national technical, legal and political approaches to resolving environmental problems are at the center of the lectures and deliberations of the NEIEP, individual participation and a change in attitudes is also stressed, as all human beings are polluters and should become environmentally educated and concerned citizens.

The activities of the NEIEP come at a time when the first ever Earth Summit, organized by the United Nations Conference on Environmental Development (UNCED), will be taking place in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, between 1-12 June 1992.

Due to weather conditions Agenda has been postponed

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Obituary: Alex Haley Author of black bestseller dies, aged 70

By Richard H. King

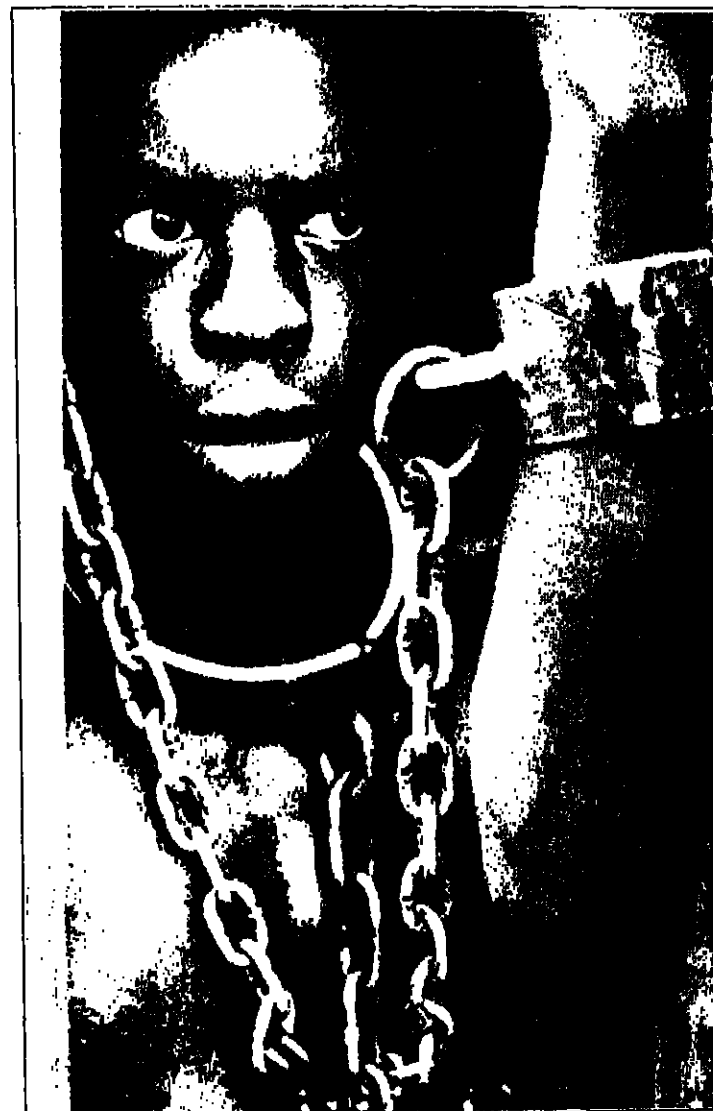
REMEMBERED IN most people's minds as the author of the bestseller *Roots*, American author Alex Haley died this month of a heart attack in a Seattle hospital, aged 70. Described by its author as "fiction," *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* was published in autumn 1976. By April of the next year it had sold two million copies and won a major book award. Even as Haley was finishing the book, ABC was making it into an eight-part television movie. It was seen by an enormous television audience in January 1977, and was followed by a 12-hour sequel, *Roots: The Next Generation*, in February 1979.

Clearly *Roots* touched some essential chord in the American psyche at the time. Why it did so is not incomprehensible in retrospect. First, *Roots* combined the authenticity of history with the vividness of fiction to make an epic tale focusing on the story of four generations of African-Americans. Not since *Gone with the Wind* had the popular imagination been so stirred. Even more than Mrs Mitchell's popular classic, Haley's book offered a vision of the past, of hope, inspiration and degradation. But in the wake of the civil rights movement, and for the first time, a popular classic was devoted to resurrecting the "lost cause" of the white South of excavating the yet-to-be-discovered histories of African-Americans.

Roots was popular with white Americans as well. Seventy-one per cent of the actual television audience watched the last episode of the first series. By no means a whitewash of chattel slavery nor replete with white figures of character of courage, *Roots* still moved white Americans with the story of the disruption of an African Eden by cruel European slaves, the militant freedom of a slave, Kunta Kinte, the gradual emergence of Kinte's black family in slavery and its survival into freedom after 1865. It was literally rags to riches, the American Dream told from the black point of view, with social and moral significance added by Haley. Perhaps the "hero" of *Roots* was the family, an institution that Americans of both races saw increasingly beleaguered.

Moreover, *Roots* traced the fascinating process by which Haley answered the question that most people, especially African-Americans, needed to ask: Where did I — where did we — come from? The story of Haley's discovery of the answer concludes *Roots*. At the end of the Gambian River in West Africa was not a "land of darkness" but an old story (storyteller) who made the link between the two worlds.

Haley had heard as a young boy on his Tennessee and the African homeland. The magical moment came, wrote Haley, when the griot said, "about the time the King's soldiers came... the slaves of the four sons, Kunta Kinte... and he was never seen again..." Haley was struck. "I sat as if I were carved of stone. My blood seemed to have congealed." Haley's greater contribution to Afro-American — and American history — and literature may have been his co-authorship of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965). Like many young black men in America, Haley found more opportunities in military



Kunta Kinte, Haley's ancestor in the 1977 film 'Roots'

ey, and black Americans, had come home.

But the criticisms, some petty and some disturbing, were not long in coming. Many black critics wondered why *Roots* had been so well received by whites. Other critics wondered if Haley hadn't simply turned *Gone with the Wind* racial stereotypes on their heads. Professional historians began calling attention to the fictional elements of the text — obviously invented dialogues and incidents — and wondered where the fact/fiction divide properly belonged. Others found historical inconsistencies, anachronisms and implausibilities.

Most damaging was the challenge from the British journalist Mark Ottaway in *The Sunday Times*. Ottaway challenged the authenticity of the story of Kunta Kinte with which the Gambian griot had first stunned Haley. In response, Haley admitted the conjectural nature of much of his historical reconstruction and offered the following justification:

"I, we, need a place called Eden. My people need a Pilgrim's Rock. I wanted to portray our original culture in its pristine state, and I know it is a fair appraisal. But you (Ottaway) are absolutely right and fair to say, however, that it was not the way Juffure (the Gambian village) then was."

Haley's greater contribution to Afro-American — and American history — and literature may have been his co-authorship of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965). Like many young black men in America, Haley found more opportunities in military

than civilian life. He spent 20 years in the US Coast Guard and turned his hand to professional journalism upon leaving in 1959. Though never a particularly political man, Haley wrote an article on the growing Nation of Islam for *Reader's Digest*. In the process Haley met his most brilliant young leader, Malcolm X, and later interviewed him. After being approached by a publisher Haley agreed to try to persuade Malcolm to collaborate on an autobiography. The portrait that emerged was one of an intelligent, appealing and very angry black man in the process of growth.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X only appeared in February 1965, one of the political murders of the 1960s that disfigured the political and moral landscape of the country. "He was the most electric personality I have ever met," concluded Haley in his epilogue. "and I still can't quite conceive him dead."

Through Haley only completed two years of college and had no formal training as a historian, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and *Roots* were of inestimable importance. He recorded and then popularized the impulses that lay at the heart of the cultural reawakening of black Americans in the 1960s and 1970s. *Roots* was not a great novel of historical work; but the idea behind it was a compelling one and Haley made the most of it.

Alex Palmer Haley, born New York 11 August 1921, Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 1977, died Seattle 10 February 1992.

The Independent

Exclusive Marlon Brando stars in new epic 'Christopher Columbus: The Discovery'

MOVIE LEGEND Marlon Brando has just completed his powerful performance as the Inquisitor Tomas De Torquemada in *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery*, directed by John Glen and produced by Alexander and Ilya Salkind.

The super-production also stars Tom Selleck as King Ferdinand of Spain, Rachel Ward as his Queen Isabella, and George Corraface as Christopher Columbus. They converged on Madrid with the rest of the cast and crew, who previous to this had filmed spectacular action scenes at St John in the US Virgin Islands.

Pandemonium soon erupted in Spain as news of the presence of these superstars spread like wildfire. It didn't take long for reporters to find out where the stars were staying, and their hotel was under virtual siege. Additional security had to be employed both in the hotel and on the set. Veritable car chase scenes ensued, with dozens of pursuing press bloodhounds hot on the trail of Brando leaving the set, and battalions of others awaiting to ambush him at the hotel. Battles raged between security guards and over-enthusiastic media at the hotel. On location, special measures had to be employed to ensure that filming continued in relatively undisturbed and quality conditions in breathtaking settings.

In contrast to the ceaseless frenzied vigil outside, the silence was absolute as Brando began filming his first scenes with Sel-

leck. The driving force behind the Queen's zealous desire to bring Christianity to the world over, he is not impervious to her delicate charms — nor sympathetic to Columbus' proposed mission. Even when the intrepid explorer returns triumphant, with both converts and gold, he remains aloof and skeptical — yet grudgingly recognizes the exploit.

Handsome, charismatic George Corraface proved his star quality by giving an impressive performance and holding his own even amongst such distinguished company. Chosen by director John Glen, he was the last discovery of Sir David Lean, who had signed him to play the lead in *Nostromo*. He was also the favorite film and theater actor of director Peter Brook. Indeed, Marlon Brando is said to have been very impressed by Corraface's performance when shown footage from the film on his arrival in Madrid.

Tom Selleck is of course famous for *Magnum, P.I.* and *Three Men and a Cradle*, and English actress Rachel Ward was an overnight star after the success of *The Thornbirds*.

Academy Award winners abound on the set of this super-production: The screenplay is by John Briley, an Oscar laureate for *Gandhi*, and two-time Oscar winner Mario Puzo, whose credits include *The Godfather* and *Superman*, and, of course, Marlon Brando. In addition to the two Oscars won, he was nominated for *A Streetcar Named De-*



Sills

sire, *Viva Zapata!* and *Julius Caesar*.

Superman producers Alexander and Ilya Salkind signed on top director John Glen for *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery*. He is renowned for the five most recent Bond movies which, combined, were the biggest grossers of the series.

The three official replicas of Columbus' ships, the "Santa Maria", "Pinta" and "Nina" are used in the film, part of the contribution by the *Quinto Centenario Espana* committee, who are giving their exclusive film collaboration and assistance to the production.

Near completion, *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery* was filmed in Malta, Spain and the Virgin Islands. The film will be given a world-wide release in Summer 1992 to coincide with the 500th anniversary celebrations of the Discovery of America.

It is rare that Brando can be persuaded to return to the screen, but the role of Torquemada could almost be believed to be

The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on
Jordan
Television
from
29- February
to 6 March

ENGLISH PROGRAM

SATURDAY

8:30 — America's Funniest Home Videos.
9:00 — Encounter.
9:30 — Stamps of Greatness: The life and works of Martin Luther, the 16th century protestant reformer.
10:00 — News in English.
10:20 — Grim Pickings. A mini series: Betsy gets to meet her sons and grandsons at the cider farm, but her bossiness causes a lot of tension between them.

SUNDAY

8:30 — Empty Nest: Laverne, the doctor's nurse, goes on a vacation and his previous nurse takes up the job temporarily.
9:10 — Equinox: A scientific program on the scanner which helps doctors see tiny details of the human body, especially in the brain.
10:00 — News in English.
10:20 — Grim pickings: Jeremy claims that the deceased, Daniel, paid him money as a partner in a business deal. The investigations annoy Betsy because they mean disrupting the picking season.

MONDAY

8:30 — Land of Hope and Gloria: "Taste of England": American tourists at Beaumont House are given a taste of England.
9:10 — Capital City: The Ikeda fund signs an agreement with Shane Longman and tries to change the working habits at Shane. The agreement is never completed, which pleases Leonard who had feared a Japanese takeover.
10:00 — News in English.
10:20 — Gambler: Continuation of the story of Brady Hoax



Cornel Achilles stars as George Dubcek in *Teech*, Wednesday at 8:30

who went after the Macord gang to save his abducted son.

TUESDAY

8:30 — Evening Shade: The coach rudely insults Herman's father.
9:10 — Golden Years: With



Burning Shore on Wednesday at 10:20

help, the old man manages easily to escape from being killed.
10:00 — News in English.
10:20 — G.B.H. "Message understood": Jim Nilson is attacked and his place is ransacked for information that could damage Michael's reputation as a politician.

WEDNESDAY

8:30 — Teech, "Losers": Who will win the basketball game — The Lions or the Gazelles?
9:10 — World of Audubon: Nothing is more thrilling than the re-discovery of a long-believed extinct species. A colony of black-footed porpoises relocated in Wyoming in 1981 after decades of absence.
10:00 — News in English
10:20 — Burning shore.

THURSDAY

8:30 — Spatz: Tony pretends to be the restaurant's manager, but not for long.
9:10 — N.B.A. Basketball.
10:00 — News in English.
10:20 — Movie of the week: "The Shell Seekers" Starring Angela Lansbury: The film is about a sick widow who teaches her son and two daughters a valuable lesson about love and its supremacy to material belonging.

FRIDAY

8:30 — Lenny: Lenny's father decides to go to Florida, while his mother refuses to leave her beloved house and city.
9:10 — Derrick.
10:00 — News in English.
10:20 — Chancer: Jimmy Blake, the bank director, plans to retire and tries to destroy Stephen Crane because he thinks Stephen is conspiring against him.

FRENCH PROGRAM

SAMEDI

6:00 — Les tortues Ninja. A cartoon series.

6:30 — La famille Fontaine.
7:00 — News in French.

DIMANCHE

5:30 — La Maison Bleue. A cartoon series.
5:45 — Géoscope. A documentary program.
6:10 — L'école des fans. Children sing the songs of their favorite singers.
7:00 — News in French.
7:15 — Carnet de notes. A musical program.

LUNDI

6:00 — Le monde sous-marin de Jacques-Yves Cousteau. A documentary program about life in the sea.
7:00 — News in French.
7:15 — The Weekly Sports Magazine.

MARDI

6:00 — A program for children.
6:15 — Les tortues Ninja. A cartoon series.
6:30 — Marc et Sophie. A series about two doctors.
7:00 — News in French.
7:15 — A selection of French songs.

MERCREDI

6:00 — A classical music program.
7:00 — News in French.
7:15 — Azimuts. A documentary program.

JEUDI

6:00 — A documentary program.
5:30 — Maguy. A comedy series about Maguy and her husband.
7:00 — News in French.
7:15 — International Circus.

VENREDI

5:30 — Le Tatoué. A French film.
7:00 — News in French.
7:15 — Ariane. A documentary program.

JEANE DIXON'S Your Horoscope



ARIES (21 March - 19 April): Do not let baseless fears throw you off-track. Tact and persuasion are your strongest allies at work. Lay your cards on the table. Deceit must not be permitted to enter your personal relationships.

TAURUS (20 April - 20 May): Focus on job efficiency, health matters and labour conditions. A compromise can alleviate chaos in the workplace. Replace outmoded methods. An excellent week to adopt a new pet.

GEMINI (21 May - 20 June): Good fortune awaits you this week. When scheduling appointments in other cities, allow for time differences. Devote more attention to your close relationships.

CANCER (21 June - 22 July): Smile and conceal that big stick you are carrying! Your past could be impacting on your present. Treasure your memories without dwelling on what might have been. Dreams are full of significance.

LEO (23 July - 22 August): Heed someone's body language — loved one may be holding something back. Do not discuss your financial dealings with friends. Shopping bargains can be found in your own neighborhood.

VIRGO (23 August - 22 September): Taking a close look at the financial page will delight you. Plan ahead, devising new ways to reduce your work load. Relax at home this weekend after reviewing next week's busy schedule.

LIBRA (23 September - 22 October): Thwarting influences may upset your regular routine. Curb a tendency to think of "I" instead of "us." Teamwork will help you perform miracles. Avoid financial risks. Loved one shares a secret.

SCORPIO (23 October - 21 November): Your home life may be topsy-turvy now. An unexpected guest will only add to the confusion. Do not try to hide a health or occupational problem. A friend will be glad to help you.

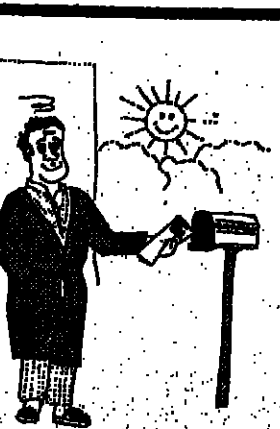
SAGITTARIUS (22 November - 21 December): Be extra tactful if you sense you are treading on sensitive toes. Do not lump friends and business associates into the same category. Your intuition works great in both finance and romance.

CAPRICORN (22 December - 19 January): Communications show tremendous improvement. Although a deal is put back together, certain promises may not be kept. Direct your anger only at those who cause you problems.

AQUARIUS (20 January - 18 February): Pay more attention to nuances and you will stay ahead of the crowd. A too-good-to-be-true financial deal should be bypassed. Give a present to the object of your affections!

PISCES (19 February - 20 March): An explanation may not make sense. Bide your time; you will get more clues by week-end. Guard against giving the impression you have committed yourself to something spurious. Count on mate's support.

THIS WEEK'S CHILDREN combine mental agility with manual dexterity. Witty and flexible, they can be hard to pin down. Give these easily distracted youngsters complete solitude to study. They tend to claim numerous "best" friends and are likely to flit from one romance to another before finally settling down. These children will be happiest in a profession that allows them not to have to do the same thing regularly. They like to plot their own course and set their own priorities.



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Would You Believe....

The big, bright ball that dropped in Times Square at midnight on New Year's Eve was actually a sphere lit up by about 200 white lights. The whole contraption weighed nearly 200 pounds.

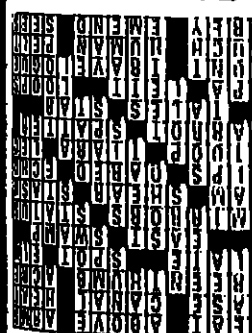
The small Delaware town of Hartly actually decided not to collect property taxes for 1991. The reason? A surplus in funds provided by folks caught speeding through town.

Sweden is about 10 percent larger in land area than California.

The unit of measurement called the meter was first designed so the circumference of the Earth would equal about 40 million of them.

One light year is about 63 trillion miles.

Solution



JORDAN BRIDGE

By Ghassan Ghanem

Would you bid them?

THIS IS a hand that came on the last Sunday at the Jordan Bridge Association:

West dealer • Both Vulnerable.

NORTH		EAST	
1 ♠	2 ♠	2 ♠	2 ♠
5 ♣	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

The bidding needs some clarification, sitting West. I decided to investigate for slam in view of the fact that Marwan would not intervene. Spade is a very valuable, their bidding depending on spade values. I am bidding 5 ♠ over 4 ♠ anyway. West double shows none or three Aces in an effort to force five Aces Blackwood considering I have a 5 ♠ Ace and using DOPI step response was Ahmed Al-Aloul watching and did not bid the slam. After you see both hands it is obvious. "on the Heart finesse" he commented. "Another 50% slam" he added.

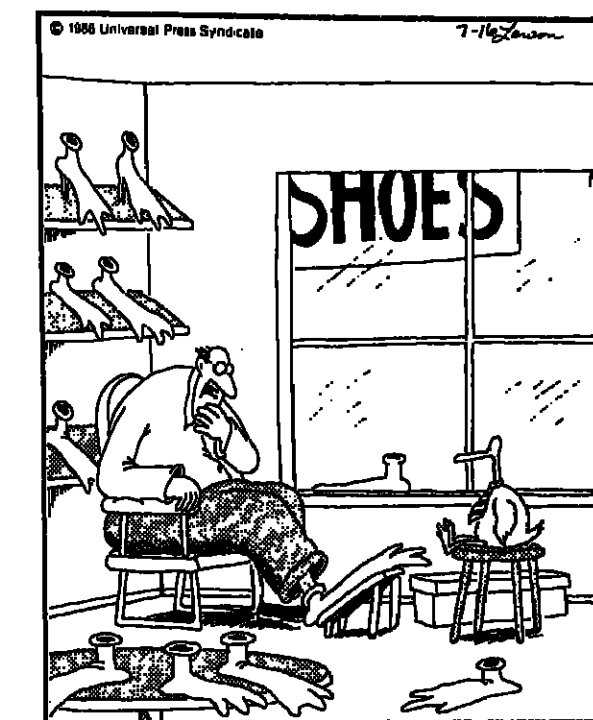
A week earlier we were playing against Ahmad and his regular partner Awwad Haddad, sitting EW we bid the following slam:

WEST		EAST	
1 N	2 ♠	2 ♠	3 ♠ (1)
3 ♠ (2)	3 N (4)	4 ♠	4 ♠ (5)
4 ♠	4 ♠	5 ♠	5 ♠
5 ♠	5 ♠	6 ♠	6 ♠

Ahmad led the ♠A and soon the hand was over. "50% slam". Ahmad commented. (1) Relay. (2) Another four cards of a minor (3) Which minor. (4) Clubs. (5) Cue bids. The problem of bidding these slams is that most of the times you can not conclude their exact percentages during bidding. What is the solution? In pairs don't bid them, but in teams bid them without hesitation specially against stronger teams. Bidding 5 ♠ with the first hand and 3N with the second would have produced an excellent score without taking risks.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Well, I'm not sure. ... You don't carry any other styles?"



"And here we are last summer off the coast of... Helen, is this Hawaii or Florida?"

